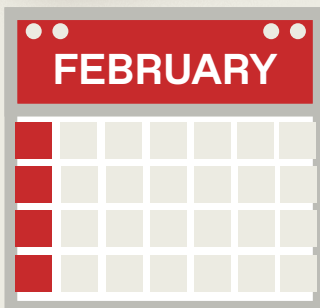
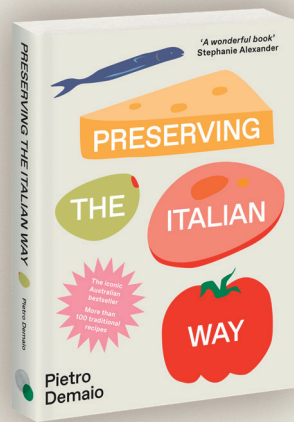


PRESERVING THE ITALIAN WAY

Pietro Demaio

Capsicum paste

Salsa di peperoni



Around April or May, when capsicums are at their reddest and cheapest and becoming a little dry, buy a box at your greengrocer or market to make this excellent paste of many uses, the preferred one being for Calabrese Salami (see page 189).

red capsicums, washed, dried and cut into 2–3 cm wide strips

Place the capsicum strips in a large saucepan with about 125 ml of water; just enough to stop the capsicum strips from sticking while they cook.

Cook over a low heat for approximately 2 hours or until most of the excess fluid has evaporated.

Pass the capsicum through a sauce-separating machine or a mouli, then, following the instructions on page 21, spoon the paste into clean bottles or jars, leaving a 2 cm gap at the top of the bottles or jars. Screw on the lids and seal hermetically in a hot water bath for 20 minutes to ensure they are airtight.

Store in a cool, dark place for up to 2 years, though it can be eaten straight away. Once opened, store in the fridge for up to 1 month.

Another way to preserve the paste is to spoon it into wide-rimmed jars and cover with a layer of salt, roughly 1 cm thick.

If using this method, make sure you allow for the extra saltiness when using the paste in a recipe, particularly for the salami.

Variation

Hot chilli paste *Peperoncini piccanti*

Instead of capsicums, use a box of long red chillies. Prepare in the same way as the capsicum paste but make sure that you wash your hands thoroughly after handling the chopped chillies, especially before going to the toilet. If you don't, you will soon discover for yourself why I suggest this!



plum.

